



Mendocino County Superior Court Self-Help Legal Access Center “SHLA”

Volunteer Placement Opportunities

If you are an individual who wishes to learn more about the Justice System, and at the same time make a significant contribution to your community, we invite you to check out the available Volunteer Placement Opportunities at the Self-Help Legal Access “SHLA” Center inside the Ukiah Superior Court.

Located on the 3rd Floor of the Ukiah Superior Courthouse, Room 304, the SHLA Center was established in March 2007 to assist the quickly growing number of self-represented litigants in the court. The center is part of a creative collaboration between the Court and the nonprofit organization Legal Services of Northern California. This public outreach project was undertaken to improve access to justice for all members of the community.

The center provides informational assistance in areas of law including domestic violence, civil harassment, elder abuse restraining orders, alternative dispute resolution, small claims, collecting judgments, and limited family law issues including adoptions, guardianships, visitation petitions and name changes. It helps self-represented litigants navigate the court system and refers people to community-based resources that can help them with a variety of needs.

Volunteers in the SHLA Center include attorneys, law students, paralegal students, undergraduate and graduate students pursuing careers in social work, and occasionally, others who have a background or interest in the legal field. Depending on their level of experience, volunteers will assist with intake, run workshops, direct people to the resources in the center, and give referrals to outside resources.

Three days a week special volunteer opportunities exist at the SHLA Center's one o'clock clinics. Monday through Wednesday at one o'clock the SHLA Center Project Attorney works with a large group to provide necessary information about a legal topic while also ensuring that individual questions get answered and legal forms are filled out correctly. The Monday workshop is for guardianship proceedings, Tuesday for restraining orders and Wednesday for small claims. Volunteers will be fundamental at these clinics, allowing larger groups of individuals to receive free legal assistance and ensuring the cohesion of the group.

The Monday Guardianship clinic assists children without responsible parents to obtain legal guardianship care. The clinic helps prospective guardians through the complicated paperwork needed to be appointed legal guardian of a child. You will teach about both Emergency and Permanent guardianships, about the stringent notice and investigation processes and how and where to file legal forms.

Tuesday at one o'clock the workshop will help people in need of Restraining Orders. The standards for obtaining an order will be discussed, as well as the notice and filing requirements. Community options for ensuring safety will also be covered.

Wednesdays at one o'clock the workshop will cover Small Claims. The prerequisites for filing a small claims matter will be discussed as well as the procedures needed to be followed. Substantive basics such as venue and "statute of limitations" or the length of time since the injury you are allowed to bring suit will be covered.

If you are interested in our volunteer opportunities, please fill out the Volunteer Interest Form (PDF File), which are available by clicking on our website or by calling the Volunteer Coordinator, Kelly, at the Mendocino Courthouse 468-3498. Please fax or mail the completed form to:

Superior Court of California, County of Mendocino
Self Help Legal Access Center: Volunteer Coordination
100 N. State Street, Room 304
Ukiah, CA 95482

If you have any questions please contact Tanva Ridino at (707) 462-4117 x305.

Guidelines

The Volunteer Coordinator maintains a volunteer file for each participant that maintains hours of service in each assignment and notes unusual achievements for use in writing letters of recommendation.

To maintain courthouse security, prospective volunteers must pass a background check before acceptance into the program.

Sincere Appreciation

The court is deeply indebted to those public-spirited individuals who provide the essential service in the volunteering of their time and talent. Their generous personal contributions have enhanced the way their fellow citizens experience the Justice System.